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HANDEL'S CLOCK MUSIC

By WILLIAM BARCLAY SQUIRE

EARLY in the reign of George I a clockmaker named Charles Clay, who came from Stockton, in Yorkshire, petitioned Parliament for a patent in respect of a musical and repeating watch or clock. A similar watch was produced about the same time by Daniel Quare, who was supported by the Company of Clock-makers and opposed Clay's application. The matter was fought out in prolonged litigation which lasted from February 1716 until the latter part of 1717, ending in a refusal of Clay's petition for a patent. For some years after this nothing is heard of Clay, who seems to have settled in London, living in the Strand. But in the *Weekly Advertiser* for 8 May, 1736, there appeared the following paragraph:

On Monday Mr. Clay, the inventor of the machine watches in the Strand, had the honour of exhibiting to Her Majesty at Kensington his surprising musical clock, which gave uncommon satisfaction to all the Royal Family present, at which time Her Majesty, to encourage so great an Artist, was pleased to order fifty guineas to be expended for numbers in the intended raffle, by which we hear Mr. Clay intends to dispose of this said beautiful and most complete piece of Machinery.

Who won the clock at the raffle and what became of it for the next hundred and odd years are unknown, but the late Mr. F. J. Britten, in his "Old Clocks and Watches and their Makers" (3rd edition, 1911, p. 359) gives a full description of it, accompanied by an illustration. According to this, it had been for many years in a manor-house in Suffolk. It stood 8 feet 6 inches high, the case being in two parts, the upper of Amboyna wood with brass mounts and the pedestal (of Spanish Mahogany and Amboyna wood) containing Clay's chiming apparatus. Mr. Britten states that the chiming machine had 21 bells, driven by a weight "though the barrel is fully 12 inches in diameter." Dampers prevented the vibration of the bells one with another and the music started directly the clock had finished striking. In the arch of the dial were shown the age of the moon, the day of the month and a list of the tunes played by the clock, viz.: "Mr. Arcangelo Corelli's Twelfth Concerto, 1st, Adagio; 2nd, Allegro; 3rd, Saraband; 4th, Jigg. The Fugue in the overture of Ariadne." Mr. Britten does not say where the clock was when he wrote, nor

who was its owner, but he was largely assisted in his work by Mr. Percy Webster, whose knowledge of old English clocks is very extensive, and that gentleman, in reply to my enquiries, kindly informs me that, to the best of his recollection, the clock was owned by the late Mr. F. A. English, of Addington Park, Surrey. Mr. Webster's description differs considerably from that given in Mr. Britten's book. He says that:

There was no listed tunes, but the musical part in the base of the clock was very elaborate, with a large pricked barrel, and (from memory) quite three octaves, with extra bells for half-notes. . . and originally a system of dampers. Another machine was contained in the upper part, playing on organ pipes: this fell into dilapidation and was removed.

The differences between Mr. Britten's and Mr. Webster's descriptions make it very desirable that the clock should be examined again. Unfortunately, Mr. English is dead, and so far I have been unable to trace the whereabouts of Clay's "surprising musical clock." That the machine created considerable interest in London at the time of its exhibition is proved by the fact that no less a person than Handel wrote and arranged at least one set of tunes for it. This fact is not mentioned in Chrysander's life of the composer, nor are the tunes to be found in the incomplete edition of his works issued by the Händel-Gesellschaft. Their existence only came to light on the disposal, in the spring of last year, of Lord Aylesford's collection of musical manuscripts. This collection was bequeathed to an ancestor of the present Earl's by Handel's friend Jennens. It consisted (*inter alia*) of a very large number of copies of Handel's music, mostly in the writing of John Christopher Smith. The copies seem to have been made in the most indiscriminate fashion and Smith filled his volumes with the first thing that came to hand, with the result that their contents are often very confusing and difficult to identify. At the sale the larger part of the collection passed into the hands of dealers, but I was fortunate enough to secure a number of miscellaneous volumes containing a quantity of unpublished compositions which seem never to have been seen by Chrysander. In two of these volumes there are two sets of tunes for a musical clock. The first set is entitled "Ten [there are really eleven] Tunes for Clay's Musical Clock." The second set begins with a "Sonata for a Musical Clock"—followed by five other pieces evidently also written for the same purpose. No. 2 of the first Set also occurs as No. 3 of the Second Set, where it has the curious title "A Voluntary on A Flight of Angels," which clearly connects the two sets with Clay's

clock. Whether they were ever actually used by Clay it is impossible to say. So far the only musical clock by him which is known is that described by Mr. Britten, and this apparently only played a selection from a Concerto by Corelli and an excerpt from the overture to Handel's "Ariadne." But the existence of these Handelian tunes shows that Handel must have seen and been interested in Clay's invention, and it is characteristic of his untiring energy that he should have taken the trouble to arrange these tunes for a mechanical clock, carefully altering the opera airs so as to avoid the inevitable *Da Capo's* of the originals. The question as to the compass of the tunes is rather difficult to decide without knowing for certain how many notes were played by Clay's machine. Mr. Britten says that the clock contained only 21 bells; Mr. Webster that the compass was three octaves. If the former is correct, the tunes in Set I could not have been played as they are written. But it is probable (as shown by comparing the two versions of the "Voluntary or Flight of Angels") that the lower part in Set I was written on the bass stave only for convenience and that it would be played in the clock an octave higher, which would bring it within the compass described by Mr. Britten. The two sets are here printed. Musically they are not of much value, but they are interesting as showing that, like Mozart in later days, mechanical reproduction of music was not beneath Handel's notice. One cannot but wonder what Handel and Mozart would have written for the Pianola!

Handel's Clock Music

Set I

No. 1.



The first system of the musical score consists of four staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom two are in bass clef. The music is written in a single system with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are trills marked with 'tr' above certain notes in the first and fourth staves.

No. 2.

The second system of the musical score consists of six staves. The top two staves are in treble clef, and the bottom four are in bass clef. The music is written in a single system with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. There are trills marked with 'tr' above certain notes in the first, third, and fifth staves.



No. 3.

The second system, labeled 'No. 3.', consists of two staves of music. The upper staff is in treble clef and the lower staff is in bass clef. The music is written in a 12/8 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and some notes are marked with a 'tr' (trill) symbol. The system is divided into three measures by vertical bar lines.



"Voilà l'augello" (Sosarme)

No. 4.

"Voilà l'augello" (Sosarme), No. 4. The score is in G major, 3/4 time. It consists of seven systems of music. The right hand plays a series of rapid, continuous sixteenth-note patterns, often with trills (tr) and grace notes (acc). The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and quarter notes, including some trills and grace notes. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

No. 5.

Allegro

This musical score for No. 5, marked 'Allegro', is written on a single treble clef staff. It consists of ten lines of music. The notation includes various rhythmic values, trills (marked 'tr'), triplets (marked '3'), and slurs. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

"Alla fama dimmi il vero" (Ottone)

No. 6.

This musical score for No. 6, titled '"Alla fama dimmi il vero" (Ottone)', is written for piano on two staves (treble and bass clef). It consists of two lines of music. The notation includes various rhythmic values, trills (marked 'tr'), and slurs. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

A handwritten musical score for a piece titled "Handel's Clock Music". The score is written on five systems of two staves each. The notation is in a single key signature (one flat) and 3/4 time. It features a variety of musical ornaments, including trills (marked with 'tr'), mordents (marked with '^^'), and triplets (marked with '3'). The melody is primarily in the upper voice, with the lower voice providing harmonic support. The piece concludes with a final cadence.

Deh lascia un bel desio (Arianna)

No. 7.

A handwritten musical score for the aria "Deh lascia un bel desio (Arianna)". The score is written on four systems of two staves each. The notation is in a single key signature (one flat) and 3/4 time. It features a variety of musical ornaments, including trills (marked with 'tr'), mordents (marked with '^^'), and triplets (marked with '3'). The melody is primarily in the upper voice, with the lower voice providing harmonic support. The piece concludes with a final cadence.

Piano accompaniment for No. 8, consisting of three systems of grand staves. The music is in 3/4 time and G major. The right hand features a melodic line with trills and grace notes, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment of eighth and sixteenth notes. The piece concludes with a final chord in the right hand.

No. 8.

Melodic line for No. 8, consisting of eight systems of single staves. The music is in 3/4 time and G major. The melody is characterized by frequent trills, grace notes, and triplet figures. The line begins with a half rest and a quarter note, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth note patterns. The piece ends with a final quarter note and a half rest.



"Dell' onda ai fieri moti" (Ottone)

No. 9.

A multi-system musical score for a piano piece. It consists of seven systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The music is in common time (C). The treble staff contains a complex melody with many trills and rapid sixteenth-note passages. The bass staff provides a steady accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the seventh system.

"In mille dolci modi" (Sosarme)

No. 10.

Trills (tr) and grace notes (wavy lines) are used throughout the melody. The accompaniment features eighth and sixteenth notes.

No. 11.

Trills (tr) and grace notes (wavy lines) are used throughout the melody. The accompaniment features eighth and sixteenth notes.

Handwritten musical score for Handel's Clock Music, Set II, Sonata No. 1. The score consists of five systems of two staves each. The music is in 3/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. Trills and ornaments are indicated by 'tr' and 'w' symbols. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

Handel's Clock Music
Set II
Sonata

No. 1.

Handwritten musical score for Handel's Clock Music, Set II, Sonata No. 1. The score consists of four systems of a single staff. The music is in 3/4 time and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

No. 2.



A Voluntary on a Flight of Angels

No. 3.

A musical score for a voluntary in 2/4 time, consisting of five systems of two staves each. The music is characterized by rapid sixteenth-note passages in the right hand and more rhythmic accompaniment in the left hand. A fermata is placed over a measure in the first system. The piece concludes with a final cadence in the fifth system.



No. 4.



No. 5.





Menuet

No. 6.



Air

No. 7.

